R E P O R T  R E S U M E S

ED 018 302 RC 002 394

COLORADO REPORT ON EDUCATION FOR BILINGUAL CHILDREN.

BY- DUHON, DOROTHY D.

PUB DATE 10 NOV 67

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.25 HC-$0.16 2P.

DESCRIPTORS- ATTITUDES, AMERICAN INDIANS, *BILINGUALISM, BILINGUAL STUDENTS, DISADVANTAGED YOUTH, *ENGLISH (SECOND LANGUAGE), EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES, EDUCATION, EXPERIENCE, LEARNING, LANGUAGE, MEXICAN AMERICANS, PROJECTS, RESEARCH, RURAL AREAS, *SPANISH AMERICANS, *SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING,

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A KEEN REALIZATION OF THE VALUE IN THE EDUCATION OF POTENTIALLY BILINGUAL CHILDREN HAS COME ABOUT AS A RESULT OF TWO STRONG FORCES--THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE PRINCIPLES OF SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING AND THE RECOGNITION THAT BILINGUALISM CAN BE AN ASSET OR A HANDICAP DEPENDING ON THE EDUCATION THE CHILD RECEIVES IN BOTH LANGUAGES. THIS REALIZATION HAS LEAD TO TWO MAJOR RESEARCH PROJECTS IN COLORADO. THE FIRST PROJECT, "THE ACCULTURATION AND EDUCATION OF RURAL QUAD-ETHNIC GROUPS FOR MAXIMUM CHOICES IN THE LARGER SOCIETY," HAS AS ITS ULTIMATE OBJECTIVE THE CONSTRUCTION OF A CURRICULAR FRAMEWORK WITHIN WHICH TEACHER AND STUDENT TOGETHER MAY RESEARCH AND RESOLVE PROBLEMS OF CROSS CULTURAL, -LINGUISTIC, AND -CONCEPTUAL INTERFERENCES. THE SECOND PROJECT IS TITLED, "A PROJECT IN AN AUTOTELIC RESPONSIVE ENVIRONMENT NURSERY SCHOOL FOR ENVIRONMENTALLY DEPRIVED SPANISH AMERICAN CHILDREN." ITS MAJOR THESIS IS THAT THE COMMON CYCLE OF CHILDREN FROM DISADVANTAGED FAMILIES (WHO ENTER SCHOOL WITHOUT THE EXPERIENCES PREREQUISITE FOR SCHOOL SUCCESS, FALL PROGRESSIVELY BEHIND OTHER CHILDREN, USUALLY DROP OUT BEFORE ACHIEVING FUNCTIONAL LITERACY, AND RETURN TO SLUM HOMES TO REAR THE NEXT DISADVANTAGED GENERATION) CAN AND MUST BE BROKEN BEFORE THE CHILD ENTERS THE FIRST GRADE. THIS REPORT WAS PRESENTED AT THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS, EL PASO, TEXAS, NOVEMBER 10-11, 1967. (ES)

ED018302

# *Colorado Report on Education for Bilingual Children*

DOROTHY D. DUHON
*Consultant, Modern Foreign Languages*
*Colorado Department of Education*

Strong forces now at work in our country are bringing about a change from a state of unawareness to a realization of what is at stake in the education of the potentially bilingual child, whatever his native language may be. We can no longer afford to ignore the resources latent in this important individual and his counterparts, nor refuse to acknowledge that among the consequences of continuing oversight are social and economic problems that stem from dropouts or inadequate education. On the other hand, the potential gains of our entire country from a well-educated, well-adjusted group of people, able to function effectively in two languages and cultures, are immeasurable.

Among the forces effecting change is a growing understanding of the principles of second language learning — a recognition that, for the pupil who does not speak English, or who speaks it poorly, we must teach it to him using modern methods developed for foreign language instruction, and taught by teachers trained as second language teachers.

Another factor of change is the recognition based on much research, that bilingualism can be an asset or a handicap depending on the education the child receives in both languages. Maintaining and strengthening his mother tongue not only improves his self-concept and general learning abilities but increases his ability to learn English.

The new emphasis on solving problems of the disadvantaged child — whether the problems are educational, environmental, or physical — as seen in federal legislation such as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, is having an impact on curriculum planning. This emphasis should grow stronger as the local schools accept their responsibility for adopting new programs instead of just enlarging their "remedial" ones. More pertinent still is the proposed Senate Bill Number S. 428, called the Bilingual Education Act, which is designed "to provide better educational opportunities for Spanish-speaking children through improving instructional programs."

Colorado, too, shows signs of its concern for meeting the problems of those children whose first language is not English. Like the proposed Senate bill mentioned previously, the Colorado Senate Joint Resolution No. 41, passed in the 46th General Assembly, calls upon school authorities "to expand and improve the existing academic programs of our schools as they relate to knowledge and understanding of Spanish-surnamed people, people of Indian descent, American Negroes, and other ethnic and nationality groups and their contributions . . . " Basic to an understanding of many of these people is recognition that their language difficulties are due in large part to the fact that, although English is a second language for them, it has seldom been taught as such.

Two major research projects in Colorado, both involving non-English-speaking children, have strong implications for bilingual educa-

RC 002 394

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

tion per se. One entitled, "The Acculturation and Education of Rural Quad-Ethnic Groups for Maximum Choices in the Larger Society" has as its ultimate objective the construction of a "curricular framework within which teacher and student together may research and resolve problems of cross-cultural, *-linguistic,** and -conceptual interferences." Funded under USOE planning and operational grants of Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, this project involves the Ute and Navajo Indian, the Spanish-speaking and English-speaking children of four school districts in southwestern Colorado. *(Italics mine)

"A project in an Autotelic Responsive Environment Nursery School for Environmentally Deprived Spanish-American Children" began in October, 1964 under the auspices of Colorado State College, Greeley. Its major thesis is that the common cycle of children from disadvantaged families (who enter school without the experiences prerequisite for school success, fall progressively behind other children, usually drop out before achieving functional literacy, and return to slum homes to rear the next disadvantaged generation) can and must be broken before the child enters the first grade. Combining aspects of similar approaches which emphasize that symbolic and linguistic skills are the foundations for later academic performance, the experiments are engaged in what Piaget would call the necessary research to find ways of raising the level of intellectual capacity in a majority of the population.

Funded under the Higher Education Act of 1965, Title III, one of our newer schools, Fort Lewis College, is offering an intensive six-weeks summer course in English for fifty American Indians, and plans to offer similar training in the fall term, and to include any foreign students and Spanish-speaking students who need the intensive English program.

Some informal, small-scale action research is taking place, but since it is seldom advertised, or repeated after one trial, it makes small impact on the language program as a whole, regardless of its merit. An example is a sixth grade Latin-American social studies unit, taught in Spanish, reinforced by the district's educational television Spanish unit, in one Denver elementary school. A first grade teacher in the same school prepared a health unit in Spanish, relating it to the breakfast and lunch programs. A few teachers in scattered schools in the state are experimenting with the Miami Linguistic Readers as a vehicle for teaching oral English and developing reading readiness.

Further action research is proposed, depending on the availability of funds, materials, or personnel. One high school plans to introduce a course taught in Spanish on Latin American history for native speakers or Level Four Spanish students. The prospective teacher is especially well qualified to teach this subject, which was her major field of college study in her native country of Uruguay.

In a concerted effort to publicize his problems, a statewide invitational conference on "The Spanish-named Child in Colorado Schools," a follow-up to the NEA-sponsored symposium of October 1965, is set for September 28-29, 1967, on the Boulder campus of the University of Colorado.

The signs are increasing that, in spite of deeply-embedded habits, we are beginning to recognize the problems of ill-developed bilingualism, and to seek solutions for them.